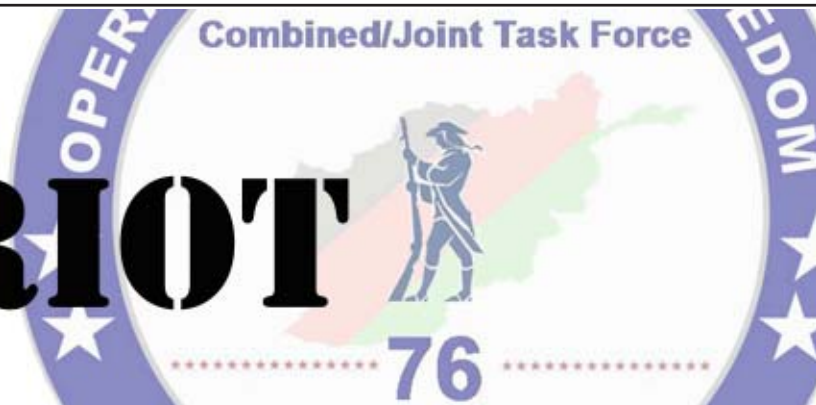




THE PATRIOT



Vol 1, Issue 3

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June 15, 2005

‘Little Boy Blue’

Afghan boy heads to States for life-saving surgery

Story and photos by
Spc. Laurie Griffin
TF Devil Public Affairs

Perched on his bed in a crowded corner, Mohamad “Blue” Omer, 6, beams a broad smile up at his father, Fatih Mohamad, sitting next to him. Of course, this is nothing unusual for a 6-year-old boy to do, until you consider the blue lips that form the smile, or the blue gums that frame his still-intact baby teeth, or the little blue fingers that grasp playfully at his father’s clothes.

Blue, as the staff at the 249th General Hospital at forward operating base Salerno, Afghanistan, call him, has Tetralogy of Fallot, a combination of four heart defects that causes the oxygenated and deoxygenated blood in his heart to mix, giving him a bluish cast to his skin, called cyanosis.

Blue was first diagnosed with TOF about a year ago after having a “Tet spell,” a condition where more blood gets diverted away from the lungs during times of high activity or agitation, while play-

ing with his friends. Blue became very short of breath and turned bluer than normal.

“I took my son to a doctor in Ghazni, Afghanistan,” said Fatih. “When we found out, the whole family became very, very sad, especially his grandmother.”

This condition can only be fixed by open heart surgery, which, for Blue, would mean a trip to Pakistan, where the surgery is extremely expensive, said Dr. Bashir Ahmadzai, one of three Afghan doctors working at the FOB Salerno hospital.

Fatih said that working as a tractor driver and farmer in the small Afghan town of Mirokhill in the Paktika Province, he could not afford to send his son to Pakistan.

“Tetralogy of Fallot is the most common of cyanotic defects and is one of the easiest to repair,” said Maj. Sloane Guy, a cardiothoracic surgeon with C-Detachment, 249th General Hospital at FOB Salerno. “Left untreated, Blue

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Mohamad “Blue” Omer, 6, looks up at his father, Fatih Mohamad, while they sit on Blue’s bed in the 249th General Hospital at forward operating base Salerno, Afghanistan. Blue has a condition called Tetralogy of Fallot, a combination of four heart defects that causes the oxygenated and deoxygenated blood in his heart to mix, giving his skin a bluish tint.

New law to affect SGLI payments, premiums

Story by Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON—Defense and Veterans Affairs officials are ironing out details of programs that will expand benefits provided through Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance.

The \$82 billion supplemental legislation signed into law by President Bush May 11 increases maximum SGLI coverage to \$400,000 and provides payouts of up to \$100,000 for servicemembers with trau-

matic injuries, explained Stephen Wurtz, the VA’s deputy assistant director for insurance.

The increased SGLI coverage will take effect Sept. 1, and the so-called “traumatic SGLI” benefit, December 1. Wurtz said the legislation directs that both benefits will be retroactive to Oct. 7, 2001.

Traumatic SGLI benefits will be retroactive for troops who have lost limbs, eyesight or speech or received other traumatic injuries as a direct results of injuries received during Op-

eration Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. The benefit does not apply to servicemembers suffering from disease.

The retroactive coverage increase is payable as a result of deaths in either operation, or under other conditions prescribed by the secretary of defense, Wurtz said.

Servicemembers enrolled in the SGLI program will notice an increase in their premiums when the increases take effect. The traumatic SGLI benefit will be rolled into the basic SGLI

program and will likely cost about \$1 a month, Wurtz said.

Troops opting for maximum SGLI coverage — \$400,000 vs. the current \$250,000 - will see their monthly premiums increase from \$16.25 to \$26, Wurtz said. This is based on the rate of 6.5 cents per \$1,000 of insurance coverage.

SGLI coverage is currently available in \$10,000 increments, but as of Sept. 1, the increments will increase to \$50,000.

Because the rates have not changed,

servicemembers who retain \$250,000 or less coverage will see no increase in their premiums, Wurtz said, except for the \$1 “traumatic SGLI” premium.

While these expanded benefits will be provided retroactively, affected servicemembers won’t be charged retroactive payments, he said. DoD will absorb that cost.

In a new twist introduced through the supplemental legislation, troops with dependents must get

See SGLI Page 4

Coalition Voices / Opinion

Daddy Is A Hero

By Nelson Wheeler

He's just a little bit too young - to understand it all, He's only three years old - he stands about three feet tall. For him it's been an awful long time - since his daddy had to go, To fight a war for freedom - against a foreign foe.

He misses watching ballgames and playing with his dad, He thinks about him often and all the fun they've had. But he won't get downhearted - at least not for very long, He knows his dad's a hero who makes right what was wrong. His dad's an American Soldier - and he's one of the very best, 'Cause he's got lots of medals he

wears proudly on his chest. To him his dad's like Superman - He's strong and brave and tall, When freedom needs defending - he's the one they call. He wakes up every morning - thinking this might be the day, His dad will get to come back home - to laugh and run and play. His mom says that it won't be long - because the war is almost won,

And his Hero will come marching home - Another job well done. Oh it will be a glorious day - When his hero gets back home, They'll make up for all the time they lost - while he was gone. And when he's a little older - his pride will only grow, In that man that became his hero - not so long ago.

Up front & centered

Morale morals



By Master Sgt.
Geoffrey Carter
RC East Public Affairs

Sometimes we are forced to make decisions, not just between right and wrong, but also between right and right.

Recently I learned of a situation in which someone's professional responsibility came into conflict with his deepest values. That got me to thinking about choices we all have to make in our daily lives.

An example, in our Army work or in private business, during a budget crisis we're sometimes forced to dismiss a loyal, hardworking employee. Family choices are sometimes even harder, like when a son or daughter has a big basketball game on the same afternoon that a VIP or our biggest client is scheduled to visit the office. Both choices are right; but no matter which choice we make, it won't feel right.

Military leaders are constantly called upon to make a choice for the good of the many at the cost of a few or just one individual. Those choices are the tough ones for everyone in a leadership position and those choices will become defining moments for the individual's character.

If you know of a person who might have suffered an injury because of an act of hate against a nationality, do you bring that incident to light, or do you suppress it so as not to alarm the whole nation?

"To become leaders in the military

or in business, managers need to translate their personal values into calculated action," says Joseph L. Badaracco, Jr., a John Shad Professor of Business Ethics at the Harvard School of Business. He states that in today's workplace, three kinds of defining moments are particularly common.

The first is personal identity, which raises the question of "Who am I?" The second type is organizational as well as personal, where both the character of groups within an organization and the character of an individual manager are at stake.

Machiavelli said, "A man who has no position in society cannot even get a dog to bark at him." I must be doing the right thing because I am always being barked at.

work on a project or task until it is completed before I go home and not ask for comp-time or over-time?

Who we are as individuals in the military is no different. Are we the type of soldier who shows up to our assigned duty station on time every morning just so we can turn around and head over to the dining facility and have breakfast before beginning work?

Defining moments for work groups is the second trait. How, for example, should a manager respond to an employee who repeatedly

Chaplain's Corner



By Chaplain (MAJ)
Claude Crisp
Joint Logistics Command
Chaplain
Bagram

Sustain - Needs Improvement

"We also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.:" (Romans 5:3-4, NKJV)

When the Army inspects an organization or does an After Action Review of an event we always end up with a final report that defines what we need to sustain, or, what may need improvement. When considering our faith it should never be either/or, it should always be both. Our faith and spiritual disciplines should be at the sustain level, but we should always be looking to improve.

To keep our faith and spiritual disciplines fresh, God in His wisdom allows us to experience challenges which test our spiritual depth. And, God allows us to be tried and tested to

strengthen our spiritual walk with Him. The end result is always for His glory, and our good.

Improvements, or deepening in faith and spiritual disciplines will result in a more effective handling of crises and challenges we will face. Life deals some difficult circumstances, but a well trained well disciplined faith and spiritual life will ensure we do not falter or fail. Perhaps this deployment is the stumbling block in your way. If it is, you can use this time while deployed to find new strength for these challenges. You can improve upon your spirituality by spending more time in prayer and meditation, Bible study, and worship. Also, your sustained faith and spiritual disciplines help to authenticate your witness. This is for those around you who witness your spiritual victories, and thereby are drawn to the God you serve.

Prayer: Dear God. Help me to always look for ways to build upon my faith and to hone the spiritual disciplines guiding my life. Amen

The third type of defining moment is the most complex, and involves defining a company's role (in our case the Army) in society.

How do these three traits relate to us working in or for the Army? Let's start with "Who am

I?" Am I the type of person who is scheduled to work from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., and do not work one minute longer? Or am I the type of person who will continue to

shows up for work late? We may take into account that the employee or soldier is a single parent and we instill our family values into letting the behavior slide. What we fail to consider when we take this action is how it might be perceived by the single soldiers or other single employees in the company.

These situations require a leader to confront personal beliefs as well as the values of their work group and their responsibilities to the people they manage and bring problems to a resolution. But as a manager you must avoid ethical myopia, where you believe that your entire group sees the problems through your eyes. Everyone has their own point of view so seek feedback from your team.

The third trait asks "Who is the Company?" In our case the company is our Army and they have a clear set of values in place: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless-Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. These values help us direct our introspection and calculate our actions. We are a part of that company or society which gives us a purpose.

Machiavelli said: "A man who has no position in society cannot even get a dog to bark at him." I must be doing the right thing because I am always being barked at.

Across Afghanistan / CJTF - 76

Afghans prepare for September elections



A registration officer reviews the application of a female candidate wanting to run for the Wolesi Jerga (lower house of the National Assembly) in Herat. "Women need to have representation so their rights are protected," said Tom Hushek, Department of State representative.

Story and photos by
Spc. Benjamin T. Donde
CTF Longhorn Public Affairs

HERAT PROVINCE- Since the fall of the Taliban regime, Afghanistan has transitioned from being ruled to ruling themselves in a free democratic society.

The transition continues as Af-

ghans prepare to vote for the Wolesi Jerga (lower house of the National Assembly) and the provincial councils in September. After the success of the 2004 presidential election, this election will constitute a further step towards the establishment of a representative government in Afghanistan.

"There's more to democracy

than just having an election," said Tom Hushek, State Department. "It's about leaders who are public servants, not leaders who have the public serve them."

The National Democratic Institute has facilitated the training of Afghans to prepare for the election. The United States Agency for International Development funds the NDI. In March 2002, NDI established offices in Afghanistan to help support the development of political parties and civic groups as well as conduct training seminars and workshops on political party development, campaigning and the electoral process.

"So far the turnouts for the work shops have been good," said Hushek. "The sense I get is that the people know there's something new going on and they're enthusiastic about it."

The candidate nomination period will last until May 19 and the final candidate list will be put out on July 12.

Candidates have to turn in an

application and meet certain criteria to be eligible to run. They must be citizens of Afghanistan, not have a criminal record, be a registered voter, and be a least 25 years old for the Wolesi Jerga. Candidates only need to be 18 years old to run for the Provincial Councils.

Each province has a certain number of seats determined by the size and population of that province. Herat has 17 seats available with five of them reserved for women.

"It's a way to protect women's rights," said Hushek, commenting on the reason for the reserved seats. "Women need to have representation so they can ensure their rights are protected."

There are also 10 seats reserved for the Kuchi, who are Afghanistan's nomadic people. "Although they don't claim any place as home, they still have the right to sit on the Wolesi Jerga," said Hushek.

NDI is also working toward

See ELECTIONS Page 4

Sending military children to college one birdie at a time

American Forces Press Service

TAMPA, Fla., June 7, 2005 - Two Ladies Professional Golf Association pros and longtime friends have teamed up to support the Special Operations Warrior Foundation through the Operation Birdie program.

Started three years ago by Catherine Cartwright, with Angela Jerman joining this year, Operation Birdie

supports the foundation's college scholarship programs for the children of fallen special operations personnel. By donating \$25 per birdie and receiving matching pledges from supporters, Cartwright raised nearly \$25,000 for the foundation last year.

"Our country's freedom is so fragile and men and women die all the time defending it," said Cartwright. "The Special

Operations Warrior Foundation gives the families a little more comfort knowing their children's futures are more secure."

Last year, Cartwright donated nearly \$25,000 to the foundation through Operation Birdie, said SOWF's Edie Rosenthal, adding "and this young lady just turned 22 years old." Cartwright turned professional in 2001 soon after high school graduation and

earned conditional status on the LPGA Tour for 2002.

"I believe in this foundation because I think everyone should have a chance to follow his or her dreams," said Cartwright. "Operation Birdie is an opportunity to salute the men and women in uniform who are in harm's way around the world and to let their families know their sacrifices and their children won't be forgotten."

Jerman too has

pledged \$25 for every birdie and \$50 for every eagle throughout the 2005 LGPA tournaments. Jerman, who lives in Columbus, Ga., knows military family life from her father's service career.

Jerman said she is joining Cartwright because she feels that giving back to those soldiers who protect and serve our country is a

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The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions for style, brevity and clarity.

Photos from the Field

Photos courtesy of TF Devil Engineers



Task Force Devil engineers rig a cache of weapons and detonate them in regional command east recently.



Across Afghanistan / CJTF - 76

PGA women putting for military children

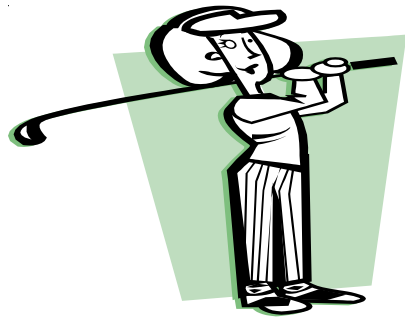
BIRDIE from Page 3

wonderful way to demonstrate how important their job is and how much it is appreciated.

"This is something I am very passionate about," explained Jerman, who has a bachelor's degree in business marketing. "I hope we can raise awareness among the millions of Americans who are golf enthusiasts about the Warrior Foundation and the great work they do providing college educations to children who have lost so much."

"We're deeply appreciative of Catherine Cartwright's and Angela Jerman's generosity and support to the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, which comes at a critical time of need for the special operations community," said foundation president John Carney. "Today there are more than 550 children across the country in the Warrior Foundation family. With everyone's help and support the SOWF is here to serve families of special operations troops and future generations."

"Going to college would not have been possible without the support of the Special Operations Warrior Foundation," explained Jessica Patterson, who is a junior attending Rutgers University in New Jersey and recently met with Cartwright and Jerman at the ShopRite LPGA



Classic in Galloway Township, N.J. Patterson's father, Air Force Special Operations Capt. Thomas Patterson, was killed during a training accident in 1981.

"These two ladies are the epitome of being first-class athletes. It says volumes about their character that they are willing to honor our fallen troops and help raise awareness and funds for the children they left behind. I am truly grateful," Patterson said.

"Catherine and Angela are wonderful role models for both the children in the Warrior Family who have suffered a great loss and for those among us who will not let that loss be forgotten," added Carney.

The foundation, a nonprofit organization since 1980, provides college scholarship grants, not loans, as well as family and financial counseling to the children surviving special operations personnel killed in an operational mission or training accident. The grants cover all costs - tuition, books, fee and room and books.

Classes prepare election candidates



Hopeful candidates for the September election of the Wolesi Jerga (lower house of the National Assembly) listen intently and take notes at the National Democratic Institutes (NDI) workshop. The workshop educated citizens on nomination procedures, the basics of democracy, and the rules and responsibilities of a candidate.

ELECTIONS from Page 3

helping Afghanistan establish political parties that aren't based on tribal or ethnic platforms, but rather on thoughts and ideas for the future.

"Having political parties is a way for a civil society to conduct the business of democracy," said Hushek.

Although the Afghan National Police and the Afghan National Army will play the leading and predominant role in security for the elections, the Provincial Reconstruction

Team and CTF Longhorn have lent a hand in providing assistance thus far.

"Coalition forces have been very good about helping out with security so that there are fewer problems for voters," said Hushek.

Come September Afghans everywhere will again have the opportunity to practice democracy by voting. Until then, they can learn the intricacies of the electoral process through workshops and voter-education classes throughout the country.

New SGLI law to increase benefits

SGLI from Page 1

their spouse's approval to purchase less than the full amount of SGLI coverage. In the case of members who are not married, notice will be provided to the designated beneficiary when the member purchases less than the maximum coverage.

The new traumatic SGLI benefit is designed to provide "a quick infusion of cash" for cash-strapped families of troops recuperating from traumatic injuries received in the line of duty, Wurtz said.

Compensation will range from \$25,000 to \$100,000, and is designed to help families of severely wounded troops leave their homes and jobs to be with their loved one during recovery. "These families incur

a lot of expenses, and this is designed to help them financially," Wurtz said.

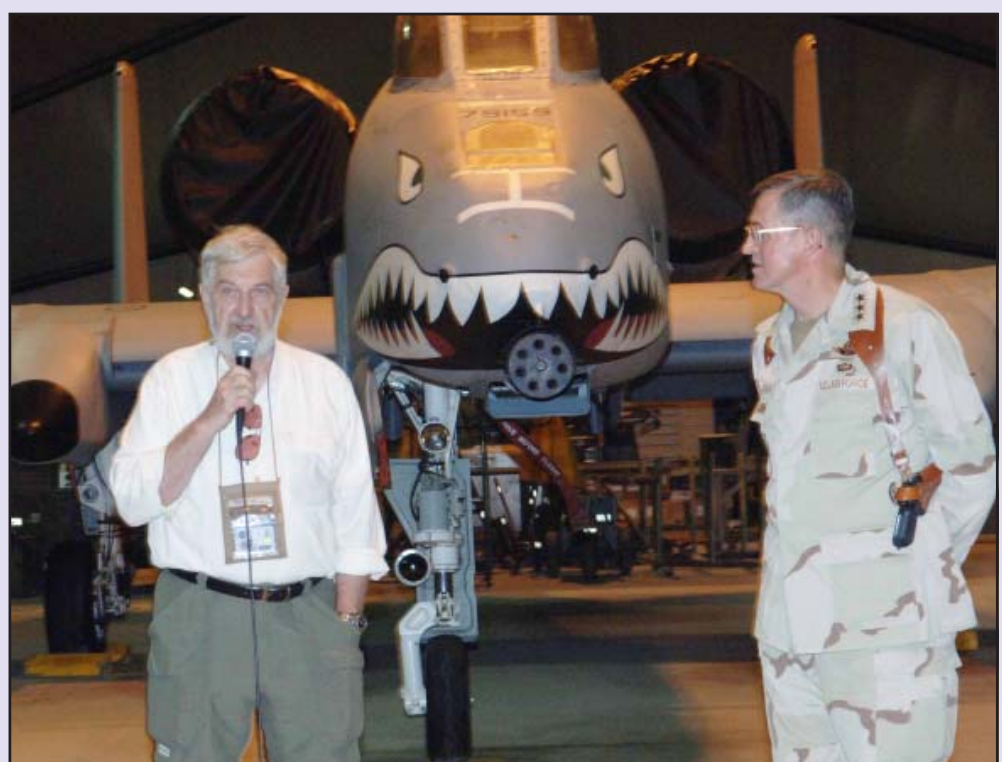
While VA staff members consult with DoD to write regulations that will put the new SGLI benefits into effect, Wurtz said, "lots and lots of details have to be worked out."

Among outstanding issues is the fact that the expanded SGLI coverage is part of the supplemental legislation package that funds operations only through Sept. 30. That's 30 days after the new SGLI limit takes effect and two months before the traumatic SGLI benefit begins.

Wurtz said VA is confident Congress will resolve this issue before there's any lapse in coverage.

VA will continue to oversee the program.

Air Force leadership visits Bagram



Mr. Nelson F. Gibbs, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Logistics (left) with Lt. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan, III, (right) 9th Air Force Commander & Combined Forces Air Component Commander fields questions at an A-10 Thunderbolt II maintenance hangar packed with hundreds of Airmen and civilians here on the flightline. Questions focused on the length of future deployments, BRAC impacts, and the status of spare/replacement parts for the A-10's. (U.S. Air Force photo by Capt. Mark D. Gibson, 455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs)

Across Afghanistan / CJTF - 76

AFGHAN ARMY HONES NEW SKILLS

Photos by Sgt. Adrian Schulte
CJTF-76 Public Affairs



(Clockwise from left) Afghan Soldiers with an Russian-made T-62 tank during a range June 7 at a training area near Kabul. An Afghan Soldier pops his head out of a tank. An Afghan tank fires a round down range. An Afghan trainer helps his students load a SPG-9 recoilless rifle round. Afghan trainees fire a mortar round. Afghan soldiers load a round into a mortar tube.



Regional Command East / Task Force Devil

An unlikely pair

Task Force Griffin Chinook lifts a unique load

Story by Capt. Greg Pipes
TF Griffin maintenance

On a bright Afghanistan day, a Task Force Griffin Chinook helicopter departed from a forward operating base northeast of Bagram Airfield.

As the aircraft took off from the FOB, the first engine failed. The pilots maneuvered the aircraft back around to ensure a safe, single-engine landing. They were lined up for landing when the second engine failed. Unable to make the landing site, the crew landed just short of the FOB's perimeter fence.

The crew suffered only minor bumps and bruises. The aircraft, however, did not fare as well. The hard landing tore off three of the four landing gear, and caused extensive damage to the airframe.

As the information flowed back to Bagram Airfield, it became apparent that the recovery of this aircraft would require skill, intuition, and creativity. After much deliberation, the command ruled out a one-time flight of the aircraft back to Bagram. A ground recovery was much too dangerous given the roads, enemy situation, and damage it would cause the aircraft. The aircraft was too close to a FOB and in too good of a condition to destroy. Therefore, the only remaining course of action was to conduct an aerial



A Task Force Griffin CH-47 Chinook is hooked up to another Chinook near a forward operating base northeast of Bagram Airfield recently. (Photo courtesy of TF Griffin)

recovery of the CH-47.

To the knowledge of the task force, such a feat had not been accomplished for many years. The process would involve removing over 16,000 pounds of components from the aircraft, including rotor blades, engines, both transmissions, seats, radios, soundproofing, fire extinguishers, avionics, and fuel.

They had to determine how to hook one Chinook to another, and find a place to set the aircraft down at Bagram.

The area chosen was on the flight line, and a pad was made with wooden pallets and mattresses strapped together.

With everything in place, the recovery aircraft hooked-up the Chinook and proceeded back to Bagram, one Chinook lifting another. Due to high winds and the awkward positioning of the sling load, the recovery took longer than expected, but went without incident. The aircraft was safely returned to Bagram.

The task force's many thanks go first to the crew that safely landed the aircraft after engine failure, then to the Boeing and the Army Material Command civilians who guided us through the various issues of recovering the aircraft. Finally, we credit the recovery aircrew that undertook a very dangerous mission in hostile territory and returned the aircraft safely to its unit.



A Chinook safely lands at Bagram after a unique flight. (Photo courtesy of TF Griffin)



A Chinook helicopter begins trip back to Bagram Airfield after a rough landing. (Photo courtesy of TF Griffin)

Regional Command East / Task Force Devil

Boy to fly to receive gift of life

BLUE from Page 1
would be unlikely to survive through his fifteenth birthday. In America, most kids who have the operation go on to live normal, active lives.”

Guy would do the operation himself, but the hospital in Salerno is just not equipped for open-heart surgery, he said. To perform the surgery, they would need, among other things, a heart-lung bypass machine and a perfusionist, the person who operates the machine, neither of which is in Salerno, he explained.

“We came up with the idea of finding a surgeon and hospital back in the United States that would do his operation as part of a humanitarian effort,” said Guy.

Through emails and phone calls to various hospitals and personal friends, Guy was able to find just what he was looking for.

Dr. Greg Deruso, a pediatric cardiac surgeon, Dr. Richard Jonas, a renowned congenital cardiac surgeon, and Dr. Gerald Martin, the chief of cardiology, all from Children’s National Medical Center in Washington, D.C., agreed to take the case pro bono with some provision for funding from the Larry King Cardiac Foundation. LKCF is an organization



Mohamad “Blue” Omer, 6, plays with a computer keyboard in the 249th General Hospital at forward operating base Salerno, Afghanistan.

whose goal is to provide funding for individuals who, due to limited means and inadequate insurance, would be otherwise unable to receive life saving treatment.

Before they can go, Blue and his father must get visas. After their visas are approved, they will be flown to America for the surgery with funding provided by The Greatest Generation Foundation, who will come to Bagram to pick them up.

“I’m so glad to finally find a solution to this problem and am so grateful to the American government for offering to help,” said Fatih, holding his son. “This is a huge gift to my life.”

“Providing medical care is probably more strategically beneficial than all the bombs you could fill the country with,” said Guy. “In the beginning of the war, this

wasn’t the case, but now this theater has matured enough for us to provide the medical care these people need.”

For now, Fatih is staying with Dr. Bashir in Khowst, Afghanistan and comes to visit his son in the hospital every day. During his visits, he stays with Blue on his bed in the corner of the small hospital and waits for their trip to America.

Blue arrived at the hospital in Salerno in mid March and has been there most of the time since, said Guy.

“Despite his heart condition, Blue is always in good spirits and rarely complains,” said Spc. Tara Miller, a health care specialist with the 249th who likes to take him for a walk at least twice a day. “He keeps things lively. Everybody here has a special place in their heart for him.”



Coalition engineers work on a road near Kabul recently. (Photo courtesy of TF Sword)

Engineers smooth out rollercoaster

Story by Raymond Mulholland

Construction Manager, 391st Engineer Battalion

How hard can it be to create a five kilometer combat trail? Well, consider that the combat trail is the number one priority for not one, but two provinces that consider it essential for their economic growth. Also consider that the project will be a joint effort between US and Polish forces, along with Afghan police. Finally, a combat trail has to be improved to provide access to the main effort. If the road could be improved, then commerce between the two provinces and the capital would greatly increase. The prosperity, in turn, would help bring stability to the region. The faith the locals have can be seen in the construction of new gas stations along the road. While simple by US standards, they would have been unthinkable even a couple years ago. These are some of the challenges that faced the 18th Engineer Brigade in Afghanistan.

The 18th Engineer Brigade called on the Polish Engineers to lead the project. To provide security for the mission, the MPs from the 3rd Battalion 116th Infantry Regiment were tasked to provide two armored HMMWVs. The 391st Eng. Batt. had the most diverse role. They were tasked to provide route clearance before the convoy left base, provide additional security elements in the form of an armored HMMWV to escort the dump trucks, and supply some critical equipment that the Polish Engineers did not possess.

Roller Coaster Road, so named because of the endless number of deep potholes that occupy its length, comes off route 4 (Old Kabul Road) in the Parwan province, and heads northeast into the Kapisa province. Using army terms, the road can best be described as a combat trail that is approximately seven meters wide. To the local population, however, it is a major road.

The road is an odd mix of bitumen hardball, gravel, and dust. In most places, the foundation of a satisfactory road is already present, although in a terrible state of disrepair. The usual procedure of using a grader to cut down the high spots to fill in the low spots will not work. This would ruin the good, solid parts of the road just to fill the low spots with dust. Instead, gravel and fines were hauled by convoys to each pot hole. The fill was then rough graded and compacted. The process was tedious, but not terribly difficult. The real challenges were in making this happen.

Being a joint operation between three nations, the most obvious challenge was communications. Translators were contracted to ensure communications with the local population, especially the police force that would help control

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Sanchez swears in re-dedicated few

Soldiers from Task Force Sabre are re-enlisted by Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, commanding general of V Corps, during a recent trip in which he visited V Corps units in Afghanistan. From left to right, Sgt. John C. Day, Sgt. Simon M. Brown, Sgt. Brandon R. Heard, and Sgt. Bryan P. Pitney, at Bagram Airfield all of 2nd Battalion, 6th Calvary. (Photo by Capt. Laurie Forand, TF Griffin Public Affairs)

Regional Command East / Task Force Devil

3/3 Marines encounter IED

Story and photo by
Sgt. 1st Class
Rick Scavetta
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

ALISHING VALLEY— A squad of troops from Company K, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines supporting Operation Celtics in this rugged terrain northwest of Jalalabad narrowly escaped the blast of an improvised explosive device.

On Monday, May 23, insurgents detonated two 107 mm rockets buried in the dirt roadway by remote control. A television camera crew from NBC Nightly News was aboard the Humvee that was hit. But the blast struck just in front of the Humvee, sending a plume of smoke and debris several feet in the air. No one was seriously injured.

"I saw a flash and the dirt rise up," said Lance Cpl. Clinton Jones, the Humvee driver. "A second later, I heard the boom. It was so loud, I went deaf."

Jones, 20, of Flagstaff, Ariz., drove through the blast, then slammed on the brakes. Sand and rocks rained down upon the Marines and newsmen riding in the rear of the open-top vehicle.

Cpl. John Pollander, 23, of Cambridge, Mass., leapt from the passenger seat shouting orders for the Marines to dismount, fan out and provide security. The Marines feared the IED was just the start of a larger ambush, a tactic used by insurgents in previous attacks.

Before the dust settled, Navy Corpsman Ron Peller, 22, of Tampa Bay, Fla., raced down the rocky path to check for casualties. Peller thought the worst, he said.

"I was in the vehicle just behind," Peller said. "After the bang, all I saw was a dark cloud rising up."

Jumping from the Humvee, NBC News correspondent Ron Allen and his crewmen Craig White and Bob Lapp began taping the aftermath. Marines checked

their bodies for injuries, and miraculously, no one was hurt. Shrapnel nicked White sending a trickle of blood down his neck.

Within moments, Marines crept upon craggy hill-sides toward a cluster of mud and stone huts. Staring down sights of their assault rifles, the Marines searched each Afghan house in the area.

About two kilometers away, Marine snipers fixed their scopes on the area. That platoon was also expecting an enemy ambush and had called for close air support. Air Force A-10 jet fighters circled overhead as the search continued. At one point, an A-10 pilot swept low through the valley firing flares as a show of force. But the enemy slipped away as night fell over Laghman province.

The squad of Marines and journalists hunkered down upon a nearby knoll as storm clouds approached. Rain, wind and hail bombarded the troops standing watch throughout the night. By morning, reinforcements arrived—2nd Platoon, Company K, who had been watching the attack from their patrol base in the mountains to the north.

Marines have been operating in area for several weeks, chasing down a Taliban warlord named Abdulah Jan. The insurgent leader, known to locals as "Pashtun," was behind the firefight that led to the deaths of two Company K Marines on May 8.

Lance Cpl. Nicholas C. Kirven and Cpl. Richard P. Schoener were killed during a mountain battle that lasted several hours and also left several dozen insurgents dead.

Fellow Marines carried their fallen comrades several miles through the hills to a helicopter landing zone overlooking the Alishing Valley—just a few hundred meters from the site of the IED attack.

As the sun crept over the mountain peaks, drying



(Top) Marines from Company K, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, along with a crew from NBC Nightly News, stand near a crater caused by an improvised explosive device that narrowly missed their convoy near Jalalabad. (Above) Kilo company Marines clear a home at a village near Jalalabad.

out the tired bunch of troops, Marines launched across the Alishing's turbulent waters to a string of Afghan huts on the opposite bank—likely the insurgents' hiding place during the previous night's attack. The NBC News crew documented the mission.

They found a set of reinforced caves along a slope outside the village. Inside the village, they discovered a few old mortar rounds and

some 12.7 mm machine gun rounds. A large white dog that charged toward one Marine was shot and killed.

But there was no sign of the enemy who detonated the IED. From the village, Marines could clearly see the spot on the road where the bomb exploded—clearly marked by a large boulder, an obvious landmark for the culprit to know when and where to detonate the buried rockets.

Afghan interpreters questioned several villagers, all of whom claimed to know little about insurgents operating in the area. Meanwhile, it was clear to Marines that the villagers were expecting a search.

"They unlocked all the doors and removed things before we got here. We've seen that before," said Cpl. Matt Carr, 27, of Pittsburgh, Penn. "They knew we would be coming."

Engineers smooth out rough ride in Pawan

ROAD from Page 7

traffic and civilians. Despite best efforts, however, there were some misunderstandings. The most critical was when coalition forces began widening the three-kilometer access road. We quickly learned that the local population uses the roads to help catch rainwater for their irrigation systems. A special meeting with the local leadership was held, and the concerns identified. With a clearer understanding of the local needs, we repaired the damage done.

Another challenge was the language barrier between the Americans

and the Polish. Although the Polish leadership spoke English fairly well, the technical aspects of this mission did create problems. To help remedy this barrier, pictures, detailed maps, and lots of sketches were used to ensure a clear understanding of what was to happen were used. While a simple solution, it was very valuable. Another method to improve communications was having the 391st as the liaison for all coordination. They were the only element that had an active part in all three tasks (security, route clearing, and combat trail repair), so it was a natural choice.

The project did have

some teething problems. Besides learning about Afghan farming techniques, coordinating start times for all the different elements proved difficult at first. The good will and hard effort of all parties was apparent, however, and hot washes were performed to improve coordinations. In a couple days, the process was working well. On site, an appreciation of each other's capabilities was quickly learned. This project, besides providing Afghanistan a much needed economic boost, has helped solidify relationships between Poland and the United States.

Regional Command East / Task Force Devil

Bagram D-Day Perimeter Challenge



(Top) Soldiers from Task Force Lightning participate in the litter carry portion of the Bagram Airfield D-Day Perimeter Challenge June 6. (Left) Spc. Cody McCartney, Task Force Lightning, knocks some out during the push-up event. (Photos by Cpl. Serge Batyrshin, TF Lightning Special Operations)

Jalalabad receiving new vet school

**Story and photos by
Sgt. 1st Class Curtis
Matsushige
TF Devil Public Affairs**

JALALABAD-At the University of Nangarhar, a new College of Veterinary Sciences building is under construction and due for completion in October 2005. The building will contain laboratories and lecture halls.

The new facility will assist the university to identify and study diseases attacking the meat producing animals locally. Such knowledge will enable farmers to produce healthier and larger herds of cattle, sheep and goat to feed an Afghanistan which presently imports one billion dollars in cattle.

Col. Lyle Jackson, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, Task Force Victory, doing his second tour in Afghanistan, secured the building's funding with help from an officer with the United States Agency for International Development about two years ago.

The large number of students and the lack of facilities made the project fit into the purpose and funding justification parameters of USAID.

During his previous deployment in 2003-4, Jackson put together a continuing education convention in coordination with professors from the University of Nangarhar, college of veterinary sciences, to update veterinarians in the latest devel-

opments in their field. Vets from surrounding villages and educators from as far away as Kabul attended the seminars.

One veterinarian said that it was the only educational update he had since graduating from college 20 years ago.

At a meeting to survey the ongoing construction of the science building, Maj. Dwight Rickard, an entomologist with TF Victory, shared his knowledge of working laboratory benches, by offering modifications to the blue prints. Rickard drew suggestions to improve functionality of the buildings three specialized laboratories.

Jackson brought several reference texts to be



Col. Lyle Jackson discusses the details of the new college of Vet Sciences building at the University of Nangarhar with the college's head professor Hakim through interpreter Shaw Nasrat.



Col. Lyle I Jackson, Dr. Veterinary medicine and Maj. Dwight Rickard, medical entomologist, presents a college professor at the University of Nangarhar a book on animal ticks. On the desk sits more reference books brought to the university by Col. Jackson.

place in the University's Library. He credits his employer in New York for providing the books for the university. Some of the book titles are 'The Digestive Physiology of Animals,' 'Veterinary Medicine for cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and horses,' 'Animal ticks', and report summaries from two different U.S. Conference of Veterinary Sciences. Dr. Bayer Darmel, Pharmacology professor, Nangarhar

University, welcomed the colonel's second gift of reference books. Some of the references used at the university in the library date as far back as 1917, and are written in Russian and English.

Jackson said he'd like to return to see the completed building and intends to procure more teaching material to include reference textbooks, periodicals and journals for the university.

Regional Command South / Task Force Bayonet

Artist emerges from ranks

Story and photos by
Pfc. Jon Arguello
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIR FIELD—Uncasing a unit's colors during a transfer of authority is a tradition almost as old as the Army itself. The ceremony symbolizes the literal hand over of authority from one commander to another. Putting up a sign or painting a landmark with the unit's crests or patch is also a tradition, a tradition representing the presence and control the unit has over the land.

Task Force Bayonet, based on Kandahar Air Field, was no exception. Soon after 173rd Brigade (Airborne) took control of Regional Command South from 25th Infantry Division (Light) units, Spc. Adrian Cisneros, an infantryman from El Paso, Texas, was picked to paint the Brigade's and its subordinate units' crests on a slab of concrete in front of the task force's headquarters.

The concrete slab, about six feet tall and over 4 feet wide, evolved into a piece of art that catches the eye of all those who enter the headquarters building. With a winged bayonet and the task force's units' crests on one side and an American flag on another, the artist's canvas has displayed his uncommon talent.

"We didn't want to change what the other units had done," Sgt. Maj. Shawn Alvarado. "We just wanted to make it our own. Every unit comes here and leaves their mark there."

The landmark is more than just a marker to let visitors to the headquarters know who is in command.

"The marker represents how much pride we have in the unit," Alvarado said. "Pride is a big part of our unit. It demonstrates how much paratroopers have pride in everything they do."

The paratrooper who painted the marker chose to go to Italy so he would have the opportunity to attend art classes there. He hopes to see his art in a gallery one day.

"I've been drawing since I can remember," said Cisneros. "I've done everything from nail art to murals. I'd like to sell some of my work one day or see it in a gallery."

Although many are surprised by how well the landmark has turned out, Alvarado isn't one of them.

"I knew it would turn out beautiful from the time I saw [Cisneros's] concept," said Alvarado. "I can't believe he's not out there doing this professionally."

Cisneros, who has even painted artwork on cars, plans to

work on his portrait skills when he returns to Italy. He even plans on staying in Europe once he reaches the end of his Army contract so he can refine his skills in one of Italy's art schools.

Incorporating his talent and pride in everything he does, Cisneros just may be another Army success story whose skills were discovered while serving his country.



(Above) Spc. Adrian Cisneros, an infantryman from 173rd Airborne Brigade, fine tunes the edge of the stars painted on a field of blue. (Top) One of Cisneros' paintings at Kandahar Airfield.

Helo crews stay cool under fire

Story by
1st Lt. Daniel Squyres
TF Storm Public Affairs

The mission was to conduct an insertion of personnel into a historically dangerous region of Afghanistan.

In the lead were two CH-47 helicopters from Delta Company, 113th Aviation Regiment based in Oregon, Washington and Nevada. Trailing them were two AH-64D Apache Longbow helicopters providing gun support for the mission.

As they made their approach to the landing zone, the Chinook pilots noticed several people enter the LZ, and then scatter into a nearby orchard. Recognizing that this might be a bad situation, the crew prepared for possible enemy contact.

Sure enough, just prior

to landing, the enemy engaged the aircraft with heavy small arms fire from both sides. Immediately, all three of Chinook's crew-chiefs returned fire. The Soldiers exited the aircraft. The pilots relayed the enemy positions to the Apaches overhead who moved into position and fired the 30mm guns and rockets.

The second Chinook also landed on the hot LZ inserting the ground forces. Both of the Chinooks sustained damage from the enemy fire shortly after the onslaught.

The Chinooks met up in flight and began to assess their damage. Suddenly, the "master caution" light in one of the Chinooks illuminated and the flight controls began to stiffen, which would soon make powered flight impossible. A forced landing seemed imminent.

The pilots, along with the Air Mission Commander, Maj. Wiley Thompson, decided to make an emergency landing rather than risking lives by continuing the flight.

The two CH-47s landed while one Apache assumed an orbit overhead to provide fire support to the damaged aircrafts.

With enemy still in close range, some of the crew-members maneuvered around the aircraft in order to establish a secure perimeter. The remaining crew-members assessed the damage and decided what repairs would be needed in order to fly the aircraft home.

The necessary information was relayed to the Task Force Storm tactical operations center and the Downed Aircraft Recovery Team (DART) was dispatched.

After determining that continued flight was possible, the crew of the Chinook decided to continue

with the mission. They proceeded, unaccompanied, to Deh Chopan to pick up additional quick reaction force personnel and inserted them in support of the injured Chinook. By the end of the day, the crew of the Chinook flew into a known enemy location three times.

Shortly after the DART team arrived on site, the defense of the aircraft was bolstered by the QRF Soldiers. The DART team unloaded all necessary equipment, including several cases of hydraulic fluid, oil, a transmission, several sheets of plywood, and an abundance of specialty tools. Without the luxury of hoists, work stands, or adequate lighting, the DART team spent several labor-intensive hours repairing the damaged aircraft and replacing its rear transmission. They worked feverishly into the night, fully aware of the very real possibility of an enemy attack under the

cover of darkness.

After repairs were complete, the team joined the aircrew in a defensive posture around the aircraft. The Chinook, along with all of the Soldiers, returned home having completed the mission, conducted hasty aircraft repairs, and defended a perimeter in enemy territory.

One of the Chinook's was piloted by Chief Warrant Officer Sean Laycox and First Lt. Kenneth Shinn and crewed by Staff Sgt. David Penrod, Sgt. Danny Reed and Sgt. Eric Smith. The second Chinook was piloted by Chief Warrant Officer Danny Manciu and First Lt. Jeremy Cameron and crewed by Staff Sgt. Dennis Bautista, Sgt. Brian Korbel and Sgt. Bryant Steele.

Chief Warrant Officer Philip Learn and First Lt. Brian Hummel were flying one of the Apaches, while Chief Warrant Officer Todd Hoover and Cpt. James Deboer, the company commander, the other.

What's Happening / News You Can Use

Vicenza High School Graduation to air

The Vicenza High School graduation will be aired everyday for a week starting Monday, June 20 on the contingency channels. The ceremony will be broadcasted four times through out each day to ensure even those parents working night shift will be able to view if they wish. This gives the deployed parents a chance to see their child or children graduate no matter where they are or work.

The channel will also play 'Hello Hon-eyes' and be played back in Vicenza, Italy.

20 June, Monday	21 June, Tuesday
0000Z	0100Z
0800Z	0900Z
1400Z	1500Z
2000Z	2100Z
22 June, Wednesday	23 June, Thursday
0200Z	0300Z
1000Z	1100Z
1600Z	1700Z
2200Z	1900Z
24 June, Friday	25 June, Saturday
0500Z	0700Z
1200Z	1300Z
1800Z	1700Z
2300Z	2000Z
26 June, Sunday	
0400Z	
1000Z	
1500Z	
1900Z	



Dont forget June 19th is Fathers day!!

Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Sends

In the Fiscal Year 2005 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, Congress extended the duration surviving family members may continue to receive Basic Allowance for Housing or remain in government quarters rent free from 180 days to 365 days. This is another example of our Nation honoring its commitment to Soldiers and families who continue to make extraordinary sacrifices for the Nation and our Army.

This extension for dependents in government quarters is effective immediately. Technical financial issues to implement the extension for Basic Allowance for Housing beyond 180 days are still being worked. HQDA will provide additional guidance on extending BAH payments once we work through the technical financial issues.

This is a temporary extension, which expires Sept. 30, 2005. The House Armed Services Committee has proposed making this temporary extension permanent in the FY 06 National Defense Authorization Act. We will continue to work this hard during the NDAA Legislative Conference scheduled in mid-June.

Should you have questions regarding this, contact Col. Mark Loring at (703) 604-2430, mark.loring@us.army.mil

Please continue to bring critical Soldier and family support issues to us so the SecArmy, CSA and I can work them for you.

-Gen. Cody

Submit your unit's story to The Patriot

Tell the whole CJOA what your unit is doing.

The Patriot is always on the lookout for amateur journalists and photographers who have a story to tell.

Send your stories to schultea@cjt76.centcom.mil.

Stand alone photos are also welcome.

Remember when submitting stories and photos to remember the 5 W's of journalism: who, what, where, when and why.

Also include full names, rank and units of troops involved and of the author.

Stories will be edited for content and to meet journalistic standards.

Mo' Money! Mo' Money! Mo' Money!

The House of Representatives has passed a \$441.6 billion defense authorization bill for fiscal 2006 that includes a 3.1 percent military pay raise for next January and higher ceilings on bonuses and special pays. The 2006 military pay raise, which the Senate is expected to match in passing its own defense bill, would be the seventh annual military raise to exceed private sector wage growth. Before the May 25 vote, Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.), chairman of the armed services committee, pulled a provision that would have opened the new TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) to any drilling Reserve or Guard member.

Mars to illuminate August sky

This month and next, Earth is catching up with Mars in an encounter that will culminate in the closest approach between the two planets in recorded history. The next time Mars may come this close is in 2287. Due to the way Jupiter's gravity tugs on Mars and perturbs its orbit, astronomers can only be certain that Mars has not come this close to Earth in the Last 5,000 years, but it may be as long as 60,000 years before it happens again.

The encounter will culminate on August 27th when Mars comes to within 34,649,589 miles of Earth and will be (next to the moon) the brightest object in the night sky.

Mars will look as large as the full moon to the naked eye. That's pretty convenient to see something that no human being has seen in recorded history. So, mark your calendar at the beginning of August to see Mars grow progressively brighter and brighter throughout the month.

Share this with your children and grandchildren. NO ONE ALIVE TODAY WILL EVER SEE THIS AGAIN

Free Stuff! The Patriot will feature a web site per issue which offers free stuff for service members.

Free mail and gifts sent to children of deployed Soldiers.

<http://www.prweb.com/releases/2004/2/prweb106818.htm>

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